

# CITY OF STAMFORD

## 19<sup>TH</sup> CHARTER REVISION

### COMMISSION

Members  
*JEANETTE BILICZNIANSKI*  
*CYNTHIA BOWSER*  
*KAREN CAMPOREALE*  
*SUE HALPERN*  
*FRANCES LANE*  
*STEPHEN KOLENBERG*

Thomas Lombardo, Chair  
Michael Larobina, Vice Chair  
Jackie Pioli, Clerk

Members  
*STEVEN LOEB*  
*ALEX MARTINEZ*  
*J.R. MCMULLEN*  
*SHELLEY MICHELSON*  
*ANTHONY PRAMBERGER, JR.*  
*CLEMON WILLIAMS*

#### MEETING REPORT

**Saturday, February 25, 2023**

**9:00 a.m.**

This meeting was held in person at the Stamford Government Center, 888 Washington Blvd., 4th Floor Democratic Caucus Room, Stamford, CT and also via Zoom.

1. Call to Order Chair Lombardo called the meeting to order at 9:08 at a.m.
2. Roll Call Chair Lombardo took roll call of all those present: Williams, Pramberger, Lane, Halpern, Camporeale, Bowser, Bilicznianski and Lombardo. The following Commissioners attended through Zoom Michaelson, Martinez, Attorney Mednick and Attorney Robertson. Excused Absence Loeb, McMullen, Pioli. Commissioner Larobina joined at 9:11 am and Kolenberg is expected to join.
3. Pledge of Allegiance- Commissioner Halpern led the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Public Comments (10 minutes) Chair Lombardo confirmed that there were no public comments.
5. Communications and Correspondence: Chair Lombardo confirmed with the commission that he had received email correspondence and distributed to the full commission from A. William Mottolese. The emailed correspondence was given to the Finance Committee for further review: Sec C5-20-3 Office of Legal Affairs/ Corporation Counsel, Sec C5-20-4 Special Counsel, Experts, Assistant Corporation Counsels.

Chair Lombardo made a motion to take items out of order to review items from Attorney Mednick. The motion was made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Commissioner Halpern. Correspondence from Attorney Mednick: Chair Lombardo presented 3 items the following the Committee to work directly with Mednick.

Authorize Attorney Mednick to work with the Finance Committee on a structural revision of Section 8 of the charter titled "Budgetary Provisions".

All in Favor: Bilicznianski, Bowser, Camporeale, Halpern, Lane. Martinez, Michaelson, Pramberger, Williams, Larobina, Lombardo

Authorize Attorney Mednick to work with the Appointed Boards Committee on a structural revision of Section 6 of the charter titled "Boards and Commissions".

All in Favor: Bilicznianski, Bowser, Camporeale, Halpern, Lane. Martinez, Michaelson, Pramberger, Williams, Larobina, Lombardo

Authorize Attorney Mednick to work with the City Departments Committee on a structural revision of Section 5 of the charter titled "City Departments".

All in Favor: Bilicznianski, Bowser, Camporeale, Halpern, Lane. Martinez, Michaelson, Pramberger, Williams, Larobina, Lombardo

6. Elected Officials Committee brought forward nine action items.

<b>Charge Number</b>	<b>Charter Section</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Committee Report Status</b>	<b>Commission Action</b>	<b>Vote Tally</b>
Charge 2 §2.a	§ec. C1-10-4	Public Hearings- Amend to provide that public hearings have an opportunity for possible public/ board member dialogue.	The committee voted 5-0 to ask attorney Mednick to draft language for the Charter such that, when Public Hearings are held for Land Use purposes (i.e. Planning and Zoning), that decisions by these Boards are not made about matters discussed at the Public Hearing until the next scheduled meeting of the Planning and Zoning Boards.	Discussion held with full Commission. Attorney Mednick to provided examples of the Proposed Language.  The Commission voted in support of the Charge change. The item goes back to the Elected Officials Committee.	11-0 In favor: Bilicznianski, Bowser, Camporeale, Halpern, Lane. Martinez, Michaelson, Pramberger, Williams, Larobina Lombardo
Charge 3 §2.b	§ec C1-10-4	Public Notice- Amend to expand and strengthen public notice requirements and make published materials more accessible.	The committee voted 5-0 that the BOR enact an ordinance with additional public notices requirements for all city Boards, Commissions and Departments, and review same on a biannual basis. The committee seeks attorney Mednick's assistance on the appropriate language.	Discussion held with full Commission. Attorney Mednick to provided examples of the Proposed Language.  The Commission voted in support of the Charge change. The item goes back to the Elected Officials Committee.	11-0 In favor: Bilicznianski, Bowser, Camporeale, Halpern, Lane. Martinez, Michaelson, Pramberger, Williams, Larobina Lombardo
Charge 9 §2.h	§ C1-80-1	Elective Officers- Consider preventing elected officers from holding dual offices, including state offices such as state representative or as appropriate with appointed Boards or Commissions	The committee voted 4-1 to hold this item for the January 28, 2023, meeting, and confirm with attorney Mednick that the city has the authority to do what the bolded Charter language states.	Discussion held with full Commission. The Commission voted in support of removing the item from the Charge Master List.	11-0 In favor: Bilicznianski, Bowser, Camporeale, Halpern, Lane. Martinez, Michaelson, Pramberger,

					Williams, Larobina Lombardo
Charge 10 §2.i	§ C1- 80-1	Elective Officers- Consider compensation for members of the Board of Representatives, Board of Education and Board of Finance	The committee voted 5-0 not to pursue this item any further.	Discussion held with full Commission.  The Commission will not pursue this Charge.	7-4 In favor: Bowser, Halpern, Martinez, Pramberger, Williams, Larobina, Lombardo  Not in Favor: Bilicznianski, Camporeale, Lane Michaelson
Charge 16 §3.d	§ C2- 10-10	Board of Representatives/President- Allow the President of the Board of Representatives to issue oath of office.	The committee voted 5-0 not to pursue any further. Attorney Mednick clarified that presiding officers of legislative bodies are not included under the state statutory authority.	Discussion held with full Commission.  The Commission will not pursue this Charge.	11-0 In favor: Bilicznianski, Bowser, Camporeale, Halpern, Lane. Martinez, Michaelson, Pramberger, Williams, Larobina Lombardo
Charge 19 §4.b	§. C3- 10-7	Executive/ Mayor's Powers-Clarify that the Mayor may issue the oath of office (might be a separate Section; make consistent with State law)	The committee determined by a 5-0 vote that no action is needed here. We need to clarify with attorney Mednick if same is true for the Fire Dept. Attorney Mednick clarified that State Statute allows for the Mayor, Town Clerk and sworn members of local police departments to issue the oath of office, so the committee determined by a 5-0 vote that no action is needed here. We need to clarify with attorney Mednick if	Discussion held with full Commission.  The Commission will not pursue this Charge.	11-0 In favor: Bilicznianski, Bowser, Camporeale, Halpern, Lane. Martinez, Michaelson, Pramberger, Williams, Larobina Lombardo

			same is true for the Fire Dept.		
Charge 28 §6.e	§ C5-20-2	City Departments/ Legal- Review whether years of experience for Corporation Counsel and counsel assigned to Board of Representatives (C1-90-1) should be uniform.	The committee voted 5-0 that, for both Corporation Counsel and counsel assigned to Board of Representatives - the attorney must have been licensed to practice law for ten years, and that five of the ten years must be as a practicing attorney in Connecticut. The committee also noted that said candidate(s) must be approved by the Board of Representatives, as an additional check.	Discussion held with full Commission.  The Commission voted in support of the Charge change.  The item goes back to Elected Officials Committee.	10-1 In Favor Bowser, Camporeale, Halpern, Lane. Martinez, Michaelson, Pramberger, Williams, Larobina Lombardo  Not in Favor: Bilicznianski,
		Minority representation on the BOE	The committee voted 4-0-1 not to pursue this item further.	Discussion held with full Commission.  The Commission will not pursue this Charge.	11-0 In favor: Bilicznianski, Bowser, Camporeale, Halpern, Lane. Martinez, Michaelson, Pramberger, Williams, Larobina Lombardo
98 119	§ C1-70-3	Elective Officers/ Board of Representatives- Give the members of the Board of Representatives staggered terms, so ½ of the Board is elected every 2 years (see 119)	The committee deliberated further on this item. It then voted 4-0 to approve this item and bring it item to the full Commission.	Discussion held with full Commission.  The Commission will not pursue this Charge.	11-0 In favor: Bilicznianski, Bowser, Camporeale, Halpern, Lane. Martinez, Michaelson, Pramberger, Williams, Larobina Lombardo

7. Appointed Boards and Commissions report: The committee meet on February 16<sup>th</sup> all members of the Charter Revisions Commission were invited to attend. Commissioner Williams was specifically invited as the issue of housing may be more closely related to the structure of city departments as opposed to boards and commissions. Also invited is Carmen Hughes presented a PowerPoint presentation DEI, A discussion of the topic DEI took place. The opinion of Mrs. Hughes on whether or not a commission on DEI would be helpful was given. She informed the Commissioners that if crafted carefully, it could be helpful but issued some caution. Attorney Mednick was asked to share his thoughts on a Housing Commission. The discussion led to a conversation regarding disability, DEI and housing. It was concluded that Attorney Mednick would draft something for the committee to review.

8. Finance Committee brought ten action items forward.

Charge Number	Charter Section	Description	Committee Report Status	Commission Action	Vote Tally
23	Sec C4-10-1	Town Clerk- Add section permitting the Town Clerk to request funding if deemed necessary from the BOF.	The Committee decided not to pursue this Charge since the budget process for the Town Clerk's office is the same as other departments and additional funding could be requested, if necessary.	Discussion held with full Commission.  The Commission will not pursue this Charge.	11-0 In favor: Bilicznianski, Bowser, Camporeale, Halpern, Lane, Martinez, Michaelson, Pramberger, Williams, Larobina Lombardo
72	Sec C7-10-8	Police & Fire- Creating Pension for Police and Fire.	The Committee decided not to pursue this Charge since the Section is clearly necessary as it creates the Police and Fire Pension Funds	Discussion held with full Commission.  The Commission will not pursue this Charge.	11-0 In favor: Bilicznianski, Bowser, Camporeale, Halpern, Lane, Martinez, Michaelson, Pramberger, Williams, Larobina Lombardo

75 76 77 111	Sec C-20-5, C8-30-9	Increasing public scrutiny and input, e.g., a digital checkbook or participatory budgeting. Consider increasing public input into the capital budget process and including participatory budgeting as part of that process, consider making the budget process more inclusive of resident involvement (i.e., Participatory budgeting and provide longer notice of Public Hearing	The Committee suggested that a public hearing involving the capital and operating budget be scheduled each September to allow resident input into the budgetary process before the budget is formed. In this regard, the language of required reports furnished by Attorney Mednick should be considered and Section C8-20-5 should be amended to permit public participation at Planning Board public meetings.	Discussion held with full Commission.  Attorney Mednick to provided examples of the Proposed Language addressing Operating and Capital Budget process.  The item goes back to the Finance Committee.	Hold
78, 110	Sec C8-30-7, C8-30-2	Consider allowing the Board of Representatives the ability to increase any item in the budget	The Committee decided not to pursue Charges #78 and 110, as if was felt that adding to the budget would interfere with the timing of the budget, however, based on the opinion of Attorney Mednick, who opined that State Statutes do not prohibit alterations in the relations between the Board of Finance and the Board of Representatives.	Discussion held with full Commission.  Attorney Mednick to provided examples of the Proposed Language Board of Reps to restore a cut to the budget by the Board Finance.  The item goes back to the Finance Committee	7-4 In favor: Bilicznianski, Bowser, Camporeale, Halpern, Lane, Martinez, Michaelson,  Not in favor: Larobina Lombardo Pramberger Williams
79	Sec C-20-5, C8-30-9	Consider allowing the Board of Representatives to restore a budget cut by 2/3 vote of the entire Board	The Committee voted to put forth Charge #79, which would allow the Board of Representatives, with a 2/3 vote of the entire Board, to restore a budget cut by the BOF, since	Discussion held with full Commission.  Attorney Mednick to provided examples of the Proposed Language to	9-2 In favor: Bilicznianski, Bowser, Camporeale, Halpern, Lane, Martinez, Michaelson, Pramberger,

			the BOR is closer to the residents who would be affected by budget cuts	by Majority vote.  The item goes back to the Finance Committee	Lombardo  Not in Favor: Larobina Williams
78,110		Consider allowing the Board of Representatives the ability to add to the proposed Mayor's budget.	Allowing the Board of Representatives to add items to the mayor's proposed budget.	Discussion held with full Commission.  The Commission will not pursue this Charge	10-1 In favor: Bilicznianski, Bowser, , Halpern, Lane. Martinez, Michaelson, Pramberger, Williams Lombardo Larobina  Not in Favor: Camporeale
80	Sec C8-30-10	Fixing of Tax Rates	The Committee reviewed this section and determined that no action was necessary as the rates took into account all items necessary to set the mill rate and provided for additional taxation in the event of miscalculation.	Discussion held with full Commission.  The Commission voted in support of the Charge change.	11-0 In favor: Bilicznianski, Bowser, Camporeale, Halpern, Lane. Martinez, Michaelson, Pramberger, Williams, Larobina Lombardo
81	Sec C80-40-5	Review of Tax for Sanitation	The Committee deferred a recommendation on this Charge pending discussions with WPCA and the assessor's office to gather additional information		Hold
82	Sec 8-30-2(b)4, C5-20-3	Show consolidating debt service schedule on all debt and make transparent all material litigation on Stamford's website and on bond offerings	The Committee focused on outstanding claims and a threshold of \$50,000 for materiality, The City's legal office may have the IT resources to make this available. We	Discussion held with full Commission.  The Commission voted in support of the Charge change.	10-1 In favor: Bowser, Camporeale Halpern, Lane. Martinez, Michaelson, Pramberger, Williams

			also decided to recommend that publication of the costs of litigation should be available to city residents.		Lombardo Larobina  Not in Favor: Bilicznianski,
83	C8-20-9, C8-30-12, c8-20-7	Approval requirements for increasing capital projects, additional appropriations	The Committee decided not to pursue this Charge since 2/3 vote of the BOF and the BOR are required for increasing the capital budget together with a positive advisory opinion from the PB	Discussion held with full Commission.  The full commission voted to remove this charge from the Master List.	11-0 In favor: Bilicznianski, Bowser, Camporeale, Halpern, Lane, Martinez, Michaelson, Pramberger, Williams, Larobina Lombardo
		Golf Commission/Golf Authority	The Commission will meet with the executive management of the Brennan course and the grounds superintendent to ascertain Brennan's capital needs and will thereafter work with Attorney Mednick to propose some language. No merger of the courses is contemplated.		Hold
		Grants Office	The Committee felt that there could be some efficiencies in the operation of the Grant Office if the Community Development Grants office would be subsumed under the City's Grants Office, but will propose that this idea be posed as a recommendation to the Board of Representatives and that it be considered as an Ordinance		



			rather than a revision to the Charter		
		Close out of Capital Projects- The suggestion was submitted by Dr.Sinani, Director of OPM. It deletes the approval authority of the Planning Board, the Board of Finance and the Board of Representatives, leaving the authority solely to the Mayor	The Committee decided not to pursue this suggestion, as this decision should require more review than just that of the Mayor	Discussion held with full Commission.  The full commission voted to remove this charge form the Master List.	11-0 In favor: Bilicznianski, Bowser, Camporeale, Halpern, Lane. Martinez, Michaelson, Pramberger, Williams, Larobina Lombardo
		Control of Appropriations: This suggestion was submitted by Dr. Sinani and would effectively change operating category approval from line items to programs and increase the amounts and/or percentages subject to approval.	The Committee decided not to pursue this suggestion as it would result in less budget item scrutiny at a time when every dollar spent in Stamford is scarce and crucial	Discussion held with full Commission.  The full commission voted to remove this charge form the Master List	11-0 In favor: Bilicznianski, Bowser, Camporeale, Halpern, Lane. Martinez, Michaelson, Pramberger, Williams, Larobina Lombardo

9. City Departments Committee report- The report was held till the next meeting.

10. DEI & Housing - added at the request of a member of the Commission

Commissioner Bilicznianski stated the following:

*“Commissioners at our last meeting expressed a desire to participate in a working group on a Housing Commission. However, given people’s schedules, time commitment and 3 months left that may be a difficult task.*

*“In order to complete the work, I believe it would entail more interviews of city staff and board of representatives. I would like to gauge your interest in such a committee in the amount of time that we have left. We can also choose just to recommend that a commission be mandated without a designated structure? Or perhaps we put it all on the table for BOR to choose from.*

*“Ultimately, drafting language will plant seeds whether they grow via the charter or an ordinance is undetermined but worth trying given Stamford’s housing situation, for example. Hopefully, if*

*it's important enough to be in the Charter, the city will act in kind to see it through with resources, etc. That may be wishful thinking on my part but I am hopeful.*

*"Regardless of the structure, please consider this is an opportunity to create a commission that will potentially impact the lives of our residents and be responsive to our constituent's needs.*

*"I want to thank Commissioner Larobina for the opportunity to think "outside of the box" on our Appointed Board Commission. This is where the idea for a Housing Commission came from. He also drafted language that incorporated all of our discussions into the Citizen Oversight and Social Responsibility Commission that would still be considered along with the working group's recommendations or perhaps, added to if the group is created.*

*"Thank you co-chairs for adding this item. I welcome comments from the Commission".*

The commission voted on keeping these topics under the lead of Chair Larobina, Appointed Boards.

10-1 In favor:

Bilicznianski, Camporeale Halpern, Lane. Martinez, Michaelson, Pramberger, Williams, Lombardo Larobina

Abstention: Bowser

11. Acceptance of minutes from February 8, 2023- Hold till the next meeting.

12. Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned 12:46pm.

*This meeting is available on [video](#).*